

CONNECTION

SUMMER 2020



Telecommunications
Access of Maryland

PROGRAMS:



Maryland Relay

Dial 7-1-1

A service for Marylanders who have difficulty using a standard telephone.



**Maryland Accessible
Telecommunications**

Equipment Distribution Program

This program provides accessible telecommunications equipment for Maryland residents ages three and older who are Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, or are living with limited speech, mobility, or cognitive abilities.

Voice/TTY:

800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960

Video Phone: 443-453-5970

Fax: 410-767-4276

mdrelay.org

**Text-to-911 now
available in Maryland!**

See page 8 for details.



TAM Joins Maryland Department of Disabilities

As of July 1, 2020, Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM) is officially an agency of the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDoD), after 12 years under the administration of the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT).

Moving TAM to Maryland Department of Disabilities made great sense for both our staff and the people we serve, as our agencies share in our mission to ensure all Marylanders have equal access to the telephone.

David Bahar, director of TAM

The move is an exciting transition for TAM! Joining MDoD's network, which is focused on coordinating and improving accessibility for Marylanders, will give us access to more resources to connect with the people we serve. By joining forces, we will have even more opportunities to bring Maryland Relay and the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program to Marylanders who are Deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, DeafBlind, or have cognitive, mobility or speech difficulty.

With the move comes some exciting new changes for the look of TAM too. New TAM, Maryland Relay, and MAT logos have been unveiled to unify the branches that make up Telecommunications Access of

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TAM Joins Maryland Department of Disabilities, continued

Maryland. The overall goal of this updated look is to create a visual that highlights the different parts of TAM and gives Marylanders a better understanding of the services and products within the department.

“Moving TAM to MDoD made great sense for both our staff and the people we serve, as our agencies share in our mission to ensure all Marylanders have equal access to the telephone,” says David Bahar, director of TAM.

“MDoD and TAM have a shared vision of promoting equality of opportunity, access, and choice for Marylanders with disabilities,” says Carol Beatty, Maryland Secretary of Disabilities. “We look forward to working with Director Bahar and his team to help build on TAM’s history of excellent outreach and service.”

While TAM is now legally a part of MDoD, our office is remaining in our current location at 301 West Preston Street, Suite 1008A in Baltimore.



We will now have additional resources to reach even more individuals and families who would benefit from access to our programs.

David Bahar, director of TAM

“TAM is still very much committed to our core Maryland Relay and MAT programs, and we will now have additional resources to reach even more individuals and families who would benefit from access to our programs. We are excited to join the MDoD team.”

Our clients can still access Maryland Relay and apply for the MAT program just as they always have, and we will be providing advanced telecommunications technologies and high-quality services as we always have, but now with even more resources at our disposal.

For more information about TAM, Maryland Relay, or the MAT program, please visit mdrelay.org or call 800-552 7724 or 410 767 6960 (Voice/TTY) or 443-453-5970 (Video Phone).



Welcome Travis Dougherty, New Maryland Relay Manager

This spring, TAM welcomed Travis Dougherty as the new Maryland Relay manager. Travis is responsible for monitoring and administrating all contracts for the vendors selected to provide Maryland Relay's free public services, including Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) and Captioned Telephone Service (CTS). As Relay manager, he will also participate in public relations activities, including trainings and presentations, to raise awareness for TAM and the programs and services we offer.

Travis worked for more than a decade as the chief executive officer for DeafTV, an online platform that shares all sign language videos for the general public. He is highly experienced in the video relay interpreting industry, having worked as both an outreach specialist and a digital communications consultant. During his time as a marketing manager for a community interpreter agency, Travis worked diligently to deliver platforms for both Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and on-site interpreting services for a number of federal, state, and local contracts.

He has more than 15 years of experience in the field of telecommunications and employment development for people with disabilities. Travis has worked with state vocational rehabilitation agencies in Maryland, Washington, D.C. and

Virginia as a workforce development specialist for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He was appointed as a council member of the Innovation, Technology, and Inclusion Council under the Executive Office of the mayor of Washington, D.C. He is also a past president and actively involved with the DC Association of the Deaf.

"Travis' years of experience and passion to serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community make him a wonderful addition to Maryland Relay and the State of Maryland," says David Bahar, director of TAM.

Travis holds a master's degree in Media Entrepreneurship from American University and a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from Gallaudet University. During his time at Gallaudet University, he had the opportunity to intern with the "Late Show with David Letterman" at CBS Studios in New York City.

"I am looking forward to working with TAM to oversee Maryland Relay and continue to provide innovative and effective telecommunications solutions for Maryland's Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities," says Travis.

TAM and Maryland Relay are thrilled to have Travis to help serve the citizens of Maryland by providing them with an exceptional service that ensures telecommunications access for all.



I am looking forward to working with TAM to oversee Maryland Relay and continue to provide innovative and effective telecommunications solutions for Maryland's Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities.

Travis Dougherty, Maryland Relay manager

Welcome Donna Broadway-Callaman, New Manager of Community Outreach



TAM is excited to announce another new member of the team! Donna Broadway-Callaman has been hired as manager of community outreach for Maryland Relay. In this position, Donna will oversee all efforts to raise awareness for the programs

and services managed by TAM, including Maryland Relay and the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program. She will also work closely with the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) to keep them up to date regarding all Maryland Relay outreach activities.

Before joining TAM, Donna served as an outreach liaison for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. During her time there, she developed a new community-based curriculum and helped establish several impactful agency initiatives, including a Brown Bag Lunch and Learn series, a canvassing campaign to promote the 2020 Census, and specialized programs for first-time and repeat homebuyers.

"We believe Donna's community outreach expertise will make her a true asset to Maryland Relay and the MAT program," says David Bahar, director of TAM. "We know her influence will

enhance our efforts to reach and serve more people across the state, and we are excited to put her ideas into action."

Earlier in her career, she also worked for the Baltimore City Office of Child Support Services as a global outreach coordinator and a project specialist for several government contractors. Donna holds a master's degree in professional studies from Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Arts from Bowie State University.

I am looking forward to contributing to the continued development and promotion of Maryland Relay and MAT.

**Donna Broadway-Callaman,
manager of community outreach**

"I am thrilled to join the TAM team, and I am looking forward to contributing to the continued development and promotion of Maryland Relay and MAT, as these wonderful programs provide essential telecommunication access for everyone in Maryland," says Donna.

We can't wait to see all of the amazing things that Donna accomplishes for TAM and Maryland Relay!

Providing Excellent Service With Hamilton Relay



We are proud to share that we have renewed our contract with our service provider, Hamilton Relay, to continue providing high-quality Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) and Captioned Telephone Service (CTS) to meet the diverse needs of the state of Maryland through February 2025.



For more information regarding Hamilton Relay, please visit hamiltonrelay.com.

GABTR Holds First Virtual Meeting

On July 15, TAM hosted the first virtual meeting of the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR). Unable to gather in person due to COVID-19, GABTR members convened over Zoom and offered the public the opportunity to live stream the meeting on the Maryland Relay Facebook page.

GABTR members, representing Maryland Relay users, heard updates on everything taking place within TAM and the Maryland Relay and MAT programs. TAM Director David Bahar introduced new staff members Travis Dougherty, Maryland Relay manager, and Donna Broadway-Callaman, Maryland Relay public relations and outreach manager, and shared the news of TAM's move to the Maryland Department of Disabilities, which became official on July 1.

Travis Dougherty provided updates on two new services in Maryland: Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) and Real-Time Text (RTT). RCC provides live captions during conference calls and is a valuable new free service for anyone who lives and/or works in Maryland – especially in this time of remote work. (For more information on RCC, see page 6 of this newsletter.)

RTT is still in development as Maryland lays the groundwork to become the first state relay to offer this new service. TAM is currently working closely with service provider Hamilton Relay and other partners to resolve issues with wireless carriers to ensure RTT rolls out smoothly. We will continue to provide updates as the service becomes available to the public.

GABTR members also heard from MAT program manager Kevin Steffy. He reported that TAM has continued to receive a steady stream of new MAT applications during the pandemic, and the team has adjusted to offer virtual evaluations whenever possible to ensure equipment

is still being distributed. He also shared that TAM is working on hosting a series of focus groups that will allow community members to evaluate a selection of new technologies that may soon be available through MAT.

***Thank you to all our members
who joined us, and to those of you
who tuned in on Facebook!***

The Maryland Relay outreach team, including Donna Broadway-Callaman and outreach coordinators Tarita Turner and Jenny Pearson, also updated the board on their recent efforts. Even though all in-person events are canceled for the time being, the team continues to come up with new and creative ways to build relationships in the community and raise awareness for Maryland Relay and the MAT program.

While we hope to see our GABTR members together in person again soon, our first virtual meeting was informative and productive. Thank you to all our members who joined us, and to those of you who tuned in on Facebook!



Introducing Remote Conference Captioning

Due to the current pandemic, many Marylanders have found themselves working from home and relying on conference calls to stay in touch with coworkers and customers. If you are currently teleworking, but you struggle to hear or follow phone conversations, you may benefit from Remote Conference Captioning (RCC). Now available from Maryland Relay, RCC allows users to read captions of what all participants are saying during conference calls. The instant captioning is made possible through the use of Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) service.

So how does RCC work? To start the service, you must have access to a computer or mobile device with Internet connection to view the captions of your conference call. Using a conference call bridge or high-quality audio

connection (telephone, webcast, VoIP), your captionist will then listen to the audio portion of the conference call and type real-time text, which displays seconds after someone has

If you are currently teleworking, but you struggle to hear or follow phone conversations, you may benefit from Remote Conference Captioning (RCC).

spoken. At any time, you may scroll up and view what has been said during the conversation by any member of the conference call. Once the call is completed, you have the ability to copy or print the transcript that was produced by the captionist during the call.

How RCC Works

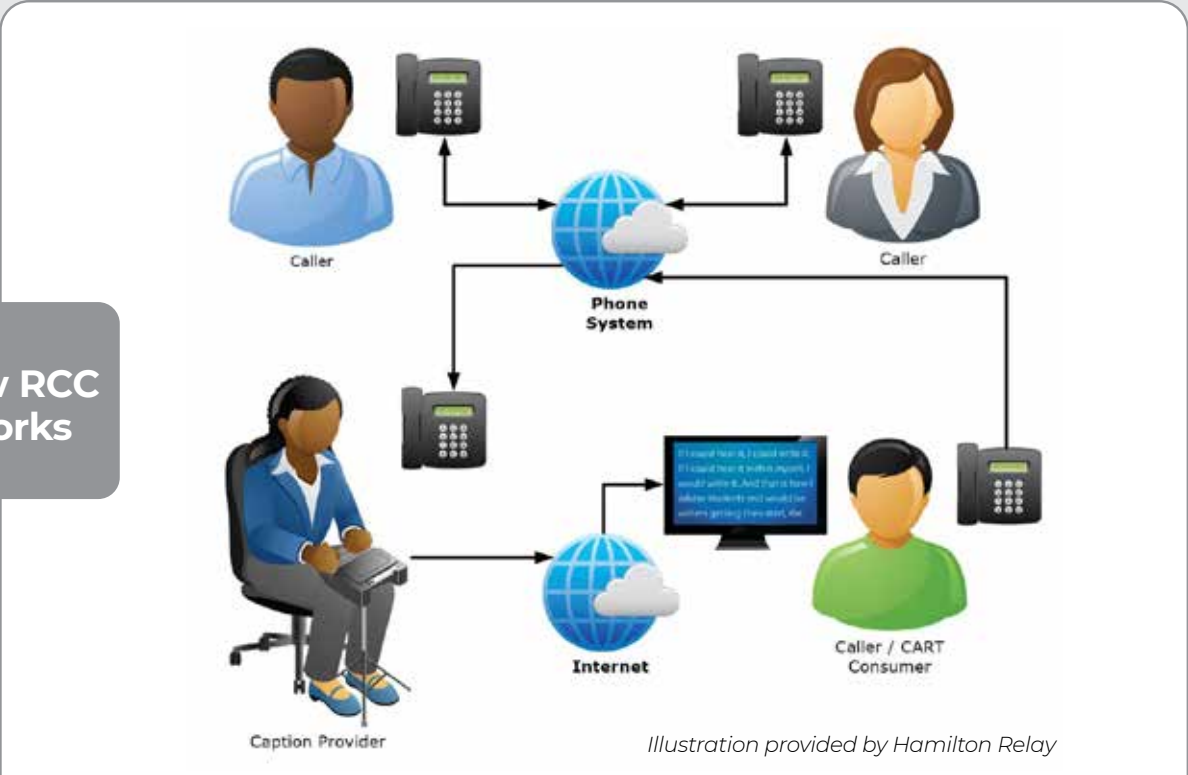


Illustration provided by Hamilton Relay

To schedule or request a captionist for your next conference call, visit <https://hamiltonrelay.com/maryland/how-it-works/rcc-remote-conference-captioning.html>

Become A Maryland Relay Partner

Each day, people across Maryland use Maryland Relay to make calls to friends, family, and businesses. While Maryland Relay helps many individuals communicate effectively, many businesses are missing the opportunity to connect with these members of the community, simply because they are unfamiliar with the service and how it works. Often, Relay calls are mistaken for telemarketers or spam calls, resulting in businesses unintentionally hanging up on customers. That's where the Maryland Relay Partner program comes into play.

This free program reduces the possibility for missed connections between Maryland Relay users and businesses by educating employees on how to identify, receive, and place Relay calls. Any Maryland-based business, organization or agency is welcome to benefit from the Relay Partner program; all that's needed to participate is a phone!

When your business signs up for the Maryland Relay Partner program, you will be given access to free onsite or virtual training with our skilled outreach coordinators. You will also receive materials and support to promote your business or

organization to Maryland Relay users, including a window decal, a listing in our online directory, a calling tips poster, language for your employee handbook, an article or blog post for your company communications, and a series of social media posts to promote that you are a Maryland Relay Partner.

Already a Maryland Relay Partner? We also offer the opportunity to retrain our current partners—either virtually or in person—to make sure your staff is up to date on all things Maryland Relay!



Maryland Relay Partner

To become a Maryland Relay Partner, visit **MDRelay.org** and complete the registration form.



Outreach Coordinators Introduce Maryland Relay Webinars



With the coronavirus pandemic canceling many in-person events across the state, our outreach coordinators Tarita Turner and Jenny Pearson have created new virtual educational programs for those who want to learn more about TAM's services and programs from the safety of home.



In hopes of reaching a larger audience while practicing social distancing, Tarita and Jenny are offering live, interactive webinars to educate Marylanders about the free assistive telecommunication options

TAM provides. The presentations touch on topics like Maryland Relay Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), Captioned Telephone Service (CTS), the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program, and more.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in learning more about TAM, Maryland Relay, or the MAT program, our outreach coordinators are available to host free webinar presentations for your school, group, organization, or business.

For more information about this opportunity, please contact our outreach coordinators directly at **jennifer.pearson@maryland.gov** or **tarita.turner@maryland.gov**.

Meet GABTR Member Lori Markland

Get to know Lori Markland, who joined the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay (GABTR) in April 2019. Lori is excited to work amongst the other dedicated members as they help frame the policies and practices of TAM.

Q: What made you want to work with GABTR?

A: I've worked in assistive technology for 19 years and have been involved in developing policies, practices, and programs that expand access to assistive technology to clients across the state. GABTR's work is an extension of the assistive technology field as it supports the improved policies and practices of telecommunications access for people with all types of disabilities.

Q: What other boards or organizations are you involved with?

A: The Hearing Accessibility Advisory Board; The Maryland Building Code Rehabilitation Council; The Disability Health Inclusion Program Advisory Committee; the Interagency Transition Council; and The Maryland Technology First Council.

Q: What is your area of professional expertise?

A: I'm the executive director of the Maryland Department of Disabilities, Assistive Technology Program (MDTAP). I've worked with MDTAP for 19 years and have held multiple positions within the assistive technology program.

Q: What do you enjoy most outside of your work with GABTR?

A: Spending time with my family! I have four children, and I savor the time we spend together.

Maryland Launches Statewide Text-to-911 Service

Effective August 20, 9-1-1 call centers across Maryland began accepting text messages via text-to-911 service. Customers of the three major wireless carriers (AT&T, former Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon) who are enrolled in their carriers' text messaging and/or data plan can send text messages to 9-1-1 in an emergency when they are unable to place a phone call.

Text-to-911 is intended for use in three scenarios:

- For individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or have difficulty speaking
- For someone who is in a situation where it is unsafe to place a voice call to 9-1-1
- For an individual who is experiencing a medical emergency and may be unable to speak

To text 9-1-1, enter 9-1-1 in the "To" line of a new text message and begin the message with the location of emergency and the type of help needed – police, fire, or emergency medical services. Once the message has been received at the 9-1-1 call center, a 9-1-1 specialist will respond. You should be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions.

If text-to-911 service is not available, you will receive a bounce-back message from your carrier telling you to place a phone or Relay call instead.



Better Hearing & Speech Month Winner Announced

Congratulations to Nancy Rogers of Baltimore County, Maryland's recipient of the Hamilton Relay 2020 Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award!

Nancy serves as the programming chair and steering committee member for the Greater Baltimore Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Her peers note that she is an outstanding advocate and has promoted use of assistive listening devices for all members to be able to actively participate in HLAA meetings and events.

One of her many accomplishments includes a written proposal to the Baltimore County Council about creating a law—similar to one that was passed in 2019 by the State of Maryland—which requires anyone receiving State funds toward the renovation or construction of a public building to install an electronic hearing loop in the main, public meeting room.

Nancy has also made it her priority to serve as an informal advisor to the Rabbi of Beth Israel Congregation Synagogue, making him aware of all things “sound-related” and how the synagogue can actively serve everyone in the community. As an advocate, she pushed for the installation of an electronic hearing loop in the main sanctuary at the synagogue. With the help of other congregants and community members, Nancy was able to raise \$15,000 to go towards this project. Due to her dedication, she was able to convince the Rabbi to install a smaller, but essential sound loop in the synagogue's chapel to honor the memory of a late HLAA-GBC member.

In addition to her work with HLAA-GBC, Nancy is a member of the Rho Chi Honor Society—where she served as vice president—as well as a master gardener and an herb committee member of the Baltimore County Master Gardener program.



Maryland Accessible
Telecommunications
Equipment Distribution Program

Volunteers Wanted to Evaluate New Equipment for MAT Program

We are currently seeking volunteers to participate in a series of focus groups this fall to help evaluate new technology solutions for the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program. We are looking for individuals within each of the following groups:

- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Mobility difficulty
- Cognitive difficulty
- Speech difficulty
- DeafBlind
- Blind/low vision

Through these focus groups, we hope to further understand the needs of our community and ensure the MAT program offers equipment that is best designed to meet these needs. Volunteers will have the opportunity to try several new telecommunications devices and provide feedback. Refreshments will also be provided.

With your help, the MAT program will continue to make certain everyone has access to telecommunication. To volunteer to join a focus group, please contact Kevin Steffy at kevin.steffy@marylandrelay.gov or **410-246-4418** for more details.





Review the Qualification Criteria



**Complete Application
online or download**



**Maryland Accessible
Telecommunications
Equipment Distribution Program**

**Application Reviewed
by the MAT program**



**Wait for Notification of Approval
via standard mail or email**



**Schedule Your Evaluation
with your closest MAT center**



**Receive Your One-on-One Evaluation
with MAT evaluator**



**Equipment Ordered
by MAT evaluator**



**Equipment Shipped to the Home
of approved applicants**

Ins and Outs of the MAT Program



The Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program distributes assistive telecommunication devices, provided by the State of Maryland, to those who apply and qualify. Since 1997, qualified MAT applicants are individuals who cannot use a standard telephone due to their hearing status, speech difficulty, low vision, low mobility, or cognitive factors.

To receive state-provided equipment, applicants must also meet specific financial requirements. Once applicants are approved, they will receive a notification via their preferred method of communication (standard mail or email). Upon receiving approval, applicants must schedule a mandatory evaluation with one of the ten MAT centers across the State of Maryland to ensure that they receive the equipment that is best suited to meet their needs. Many centers are currently offering evaluations remotely to adhere with safety protocols and social distancing guidelines.

During one-on-one MAT evaluations, a skilled program evaluator will meet with the qualified applicant to discuss their telecommunication needs and goals for the program. The evaluator will take time to work closely with new users to introduce them to equipment options and explain how to use each tool. New users will have the opportunity to practice using each option until they feel comfortable with a selected choice. Once the decision is made; the MAT evaluator will place the equipment order and it will be shipped directly to the user.

People wishing to apply for the MAT program, or who would like more information, may visit www.mdrelay.org or contact Maryland Relay at **800-552-7724 (Voice/TTY)**, **410-767-6960 (Voice/TTY)**, or **443-453-5970 (Video Phone)**. Due to safety measures that are currently in place, MAT applications should be submitted either online—via the online application form—or by emailing the application to mat.program1@maryland.gov.



Customer Corner: Using Zoom With Relay

Looking for a great way to stay connected to your family, friends, and colleagues without having to leave your home? With social distancing still being strongly encouraged throughout Maryland, Zoom video calls offer a great opportunity to communicate with loved ones or coworkers—and it's compatible with Maryland Relay and Captioned Telephone Services.

Follow these steps to easily join your next video call with Captioned Telephone:

- Use the provided link in the Zoom invite to connect to the virtual meeting
- The link will then open a new browser window, leading you to the Internet application that connects you to the video call
- An audio prompt will appear before you can enter the video call
- You must choose the “phone” option in order for the audio to work properly
- Then, using your phone or TTY device, you can dial 7-1-1 and provide the Operator (OPR) with the phone number that was listed in the original Zoom invite
- Additionally, you must provide the OPR with the Zoom call's Meeting ID and Participant ID
- Once you pass on the required information, your OPR will enter it in for you and you may proceed with the call
- Use the provided link in the Zoom invite to connect to the video call
- Once you've clicked the link, you will see an Internet application that connects you to the Zoom call
- Before you can join, you must select your audio preferences
- In order to receive audio with captions from your device, dial the phone number that is listed on the Zoom invite
- You will know when you are successfully connected via the signal meter on the display screen of your Captioned Telephone
- When the call is connected, you may then enter the call's Meeting ID number and then press the pound sign (#)
- Lastly, enter the Participant ID, that can be found on the Zoom invite, and press the pound sign (#)
- After following these steps, you should be able to use Zoom and your Captioned Telephone device together with ease



**All information regarding using Zoom with Relay and Captioned Telephone has been provided by Hamilton Relay Connector Summer 2020*



For more information about Zoom, including how to set up your own call or meeting, or to watch more helpful tutorials, please visit <https://zoom.us/>.



Telecommunications Access of Maryland

Maryland Department of Disabilities

301 West Preston Street, Suite 1008A
Baltimore, Maryland 21201



Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor



 facebook.com/MarylandRelay711

 twitter.com/MDRelay711

Congratulations To Joseph Hayden, 2020 Hamilton Relay Scholarship Winner



Each year, the Hamilton Relay Scholarship is awarded to a high school senior who is Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, or has difficulty speaking.

Joseph Hayden, graduate of Mardela Middle & High School, is this year's Maryland recipient of the 2020 Hamilton Relay High School Scholarship. Joseph was awarded \$500 to go towards his college education at Salisbury University, where he plans to study sports medicine. Congratulations, Joseph, and best of luck in college!